

The first record of *Cheiracanthium molle* in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Cheiracanthium molle L. Koch, 1875 of family Miturgidae is recorded from Al-Baha, Saudi Arabia. It is the first record of this species outside Africa.

Keywords: Spiders, Miturgidae, *Cheiracanthium molle*, Al-Baha, Saudi Arabia.

Introduction

Genus *Cheiracanthium* C.L. Koch, 1839 was transferred from the Clubionidae by Ramírez, Bonaldo & Brescovit, 1997 and recently placed in "Chiracanthiidae" by Ono, 2009 (Platnick, 2011). On the other side, some scientists "follow Deeleman-Reinhold (2001) and Raven (2009, and references therein) in placing the Eutichurinae with *Cheiracanthium* in the Clubionidae" (Jäger & Dankittipakul, 2010). This genus includes 178 species and 1 subspecies, worldwide distributed. In Africa, 42 species of *Cheiracanthium* were recorded (El-Hennawy, 2010).

Cheiracanthium molle L. Koch, 1875 is an African species recorded from: Botswana, Chad, Comores, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe (Lotz, 2007). It was described as a new species from Abyssinia (now Ethiopia) by L. Koch (1875) and re-described, in detail, by Lotz (2007: 45-49, Figs. 84-92, 137). It is collected for the first time from Al-Baha, Saudi Arabia. This is the first record outside Africa (Map 1).

Al-Baha province is situated between Makkah and Asir region, in south-western Saudi Arabia. It represents different altitudes, mostly between 800 and 2500m above the sea level. It is characterized by natural tree cover and agricultural plateau. Due to its location, Al-Baha's climate is moderate in summer and cold in winter (Doha, 2009). It belongs to the Afrotropical region. The spiders of Al-Baha are not studied yet.

Abbreviations used: ALE = anterior lateral eye; AME = anterior median eye; AM-AM = inter-distance between anterior median eyes; CA = cymbial apophysis; CI (CL/CW) = carapace index; CL = cephalothorax length; CLL = clypeal length; CON = conductor; CW = cephalothorax width; L = length; LI = total length of leg I;

MOQAW = median ocular quadrangle anterior width; MOQPW = median ocular quadrangle posterior width; OAL = ocular area length; OAW = ocular area width; p = prolateral; PLE = posterior lateral eye; PME = posterior median eye; r = retrolateral; RTA = retrolateral tibial apophysis; STL = sternum length; STW = sternum width; TA = tegular apophysis; TL = total length; v = ventral. All measurements were taken in millimetres.

***Cheiracanthium molle* L. Koch, 1875**

(Figs. 1-6, Tables 1-2, Map 1)

Material examined: 1♂, 1s♂, Saudi Arabia, Al-Baha, Gebel El-Baher (20°00'N, 41°27'E, elevation 2170m). Coll. M.S. El-Hawagry, 25 May 2011.

Description: Male (Fig. 1): TL 4.67; body and legs are creamy-yellowish; CL 2.12, CW 1.61; OAL 0.66; OAW 0.32; CLL 0.05; CI (CL/CW) 1.32 [similar to Lotz (2007)], LI:CL 6.78, STL 1.11, STW 0.79.

Eyes: posterior medians (PME) largest; anterior laterals (ALE) smallest; all inter-distances equal the diameter of AME and PLE. Eye measurements (diameters and inter-distances): AME 0.11, ALE 0.05, PME 0.13, PLE 0.11, AM-AM 0.11, AM-AL 0.11, PM-PM 0.11, PM-PL 0.11, MOQAW 0.32, MOQPW 0.37.

Chelicerae: fang without distinct basal extension, on the contrary of Lotz (2007) (Fig. 2).

Legs: leg formula I-IV-II-III (Table 1) and leg spination (Table 2) almost similar to Lotz (2007).

Table 1: Legs and pedipalp measurements (mm)

Leg	I	II	III	IV	Palp
Femur	3.55	2.39	1.85	2.97	1.06
Patella	1.06	0.79	0.64	0.90	0.26
Tibia	3.82	2.38	1.59	2.65	0.53
Metatarsus	4.24	2.76	2.38	3.71	---
Tarsus	1.70	0.79	0.74	0.85	1.01
Total length	14.37	9.11	7.20	11.08	2.86

Table 2: Leg spination

Leg	Femur	Tibia	Metatarsus
I	p 0-1-1, r 0-1-1	v 2-2,2,2-0	v 2-1 _r -1 _p
II	p 0-1-1, r 0-1-1	p 1-0-1, v 1-2-0	p 1-1-0, v 2-2,2
III	p 0-1-1, r 0-1-1	p 1-0-1, r 1-0-1, v 1-0-0	p 1-1-1, r 1-1-1, v 2-2-2
IV	p 0-1-1, r 0-1-1	p 1-0-1, r 1-0-1, v 1-0-0	p 1-1-1, r 1-1-1, v > 20

Abdomen: L 2.55; more yellowish than cephalothorax; with two darker transverse bands (Fig. 3), not "an indistinct heart-mark" as in Lotz (2007). Palp (Figs. 4-6): "cymbium elongate, longer than patella and tibia combined; three short sharply pointed RTA that curve outward; tegular apophysis large, parallel to conductor and double lobed, fishtail-like at apex; embolus long, almost encircling tegulum, ending at conductor apex; conductor unsclerotised but distinct" as described by Lotz (2007).

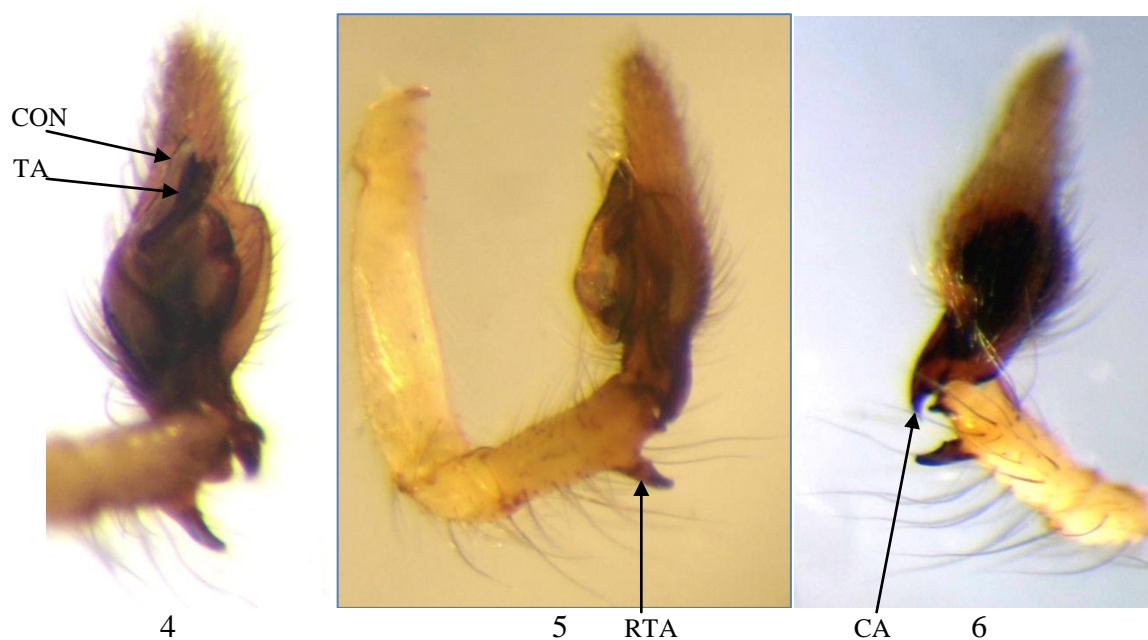
Habitat

Collected from a mountainous region, inside a building among rocks with scattered herbs.



Figs. 1-6: *Cheiracanthium molle* L. Koch, 1875 ♂.

1. Habitus. 2. Cheliceral fang, a. dorsal view, b. ventral view. 3. Abdomen, dorsal view.



4-6. Palp (left).

4. ventral view. 5. prolateral view. 6. dorsal view, showing three pointed apophyses.

CA = cymbial apophysis; CON = conductor; RTA = retrolateral tibial apophysis; TA = tegular apophysis.



Map 1. Distribution of *Cheiracanthium molle* L. Koch, 1875

* = Al-Baha, ● = known records from Africa (modified after Lotz (2007: 69, fig. 137).

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